DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 205 836 CG 015 327

AUTHOR Voydanoff, Patricia
TITLE Age Differences in the Relationship Between Perceived Job Characteristics and Job Satisfaction.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Mental Health (DHEW), Rockville, Md. Center for Studies of Metropolitan Problems.
PUB DATE Oct 80
GRANT NIMH-1-RO3-MH-27080-01
NOTE 21p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council on Family Relations (Portland, OR, October 22-25, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Age Differences; *Employee Attitudes; *Influences; *Job Satisfaction; Promotion (Occupational); Role Perception; Self Actualization; *Self Expression; Stress Variables; Supervision; *Work Environment

ABSTRACT

Extrinsic job characteristics focus on the work environment and include working conditions, co-worker relations, supervision, company policy, salary, and job security. Intrinsic characteristics deal with the content and tasks involved in the job as well as opportunities provided for self expression and self actualization, e.g. the type of work done in terms of responsibility, variety, skill and autonomy, opportunities for personal growth, and feelings of accomplishment. Relationships between intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics and job satisfaction among workers of different ages were examined. Multiple regression analyses ascertained the relative importance of 8 perceived job characteristics in relation to job satisfaction among a national probability sample of 1,533 workers. Role strain and financial rewards-promotion were included in the regression equations for all age groups. Self expression was relatively more important among younger workers, while supervision was relatively more important among older workers. The results indicated that both intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics were strongly related to job satisfaction among younger workers while extrinsic characteristics were of relatively greater importance among older workers. (Author/NRB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED205836

Age Differences in the Relationship between Perceived Job Characteristics and Job Satisfaction*

Patricia Voydanoff, Ph. D.

Merrill-Palmer Institute
Detroit, Michigan

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Patricia Voydanoff

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CG 015327

Running Head: Age Differences in Job Satisfaction

*This project was supported by the Center for Studies of Metropolitan Problems, National Institute of Mental Health, under research grant #1R03 MH27080-01.

Age Differences in the Relationship between Perceived Job Characteristics and Job Satisfaction

This study investigates the relationship between perceived job characteristics and job satisfaction among employed individuals of different ages. In earlier research relating perceived job characteristics to job satisfaction a distinction has been made between intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics. Herzberg's work (Herzberg et al., 1959; Herzberg, 1966) is most strongly associated with this distinction although others have used it apparently independently (Fox, 1971; Gurin, Veroff, and Feld, 1960; and studies of alienation from work, e.g., Finifter, 1972). Herzberg suggested that extrinsic job characteristics prevent dissatisfaction while intrinsic job characteristics create satisfying job situations. Job characteristics classfied as extrinsic focus on the context or environment in which work is done and job features determined by external events or other people. Extrinsic characteristics include working conditions, relationships with co-workers, supervision, company policy and administration, salary, and job security. Intrinsic characteristics deal with the content and tasks involved in doing a job and opportunities provided on the job for self expression and self actualization. These characteristics include the kind of work done in terms of responsibility, variety, skill, and autonomy; opportunities for personal growth and development; and feelings of pride and accomplishment (Dyer and Parker, 1975).

Little empirical work has examined the relationship between perceived job characteristics and job satisfaction by age. Three studies based on the Herzberg approach report inconsistent findings. Friedlander (1963) found that the social and technical environment is a more important source of satisfaction among older workers while intrinsic job aspects are more important for younger workers. Saleh (1964) reports that workers aged 60-65 place more emphasis on extrinsic factors as sources of satisfaction compared to the same workers discussing their experiences in middle age (30-55) and a control group of workers aged 30-55. Wernimont (1966), however, found that older workers select more intrinsic items in satisfying situations and more extrinsic items in dissatisfying situations than younger workers. In addition, Cohn (1979) reports that intrinsic aspects of work are relatively less important in relation to global well-being among older workers; however, he did not find significant differences in the relationships between intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics and job satisfaction by age category.

A related strand of research supports the usefulness of the intrinsic-extrinsic distinction in relation to age although it does not refer to job satisfaction. Studies of work values in which workers are asked how important various job characteristics are to them in their jobs indicate that intrinsic job characteristics are relatively more important among younger workers while extrinsic characteristics are relatively more important among older workers (Andrisani and Miljus, 1976; Friedlander, 1966; Herzberg et al., 1959; Jurgensen, 1978; Quinn and Cobb, 1971; Sheppard and Herrick, 1972; Singh and Baumgartel, 1966). An exception to this trend is reported by Wright and Hamilton (1978) who state that

emphasizing intrinsic characteristics is either unrelated to age or is more prevalent among older workers. However, most of the extrinsic characteristics are more important among older workers with opportunities for promotion the major exception. These data on work values are supported by the literature on youth culture which suggests that younger workers are more demanding than older workers with respect to intrinsic aspects of jobs (Flacks, 1970; Yankelovich, 1972, 1974).

This study investigates the hypothesis that intrinsic job characteristics are more strongly related to job satisfaction among younger workers while job satisfaction among older workers is more dependent upon extrinsic job characteristics. This hypothesis assumes that workers of different ages are differentially responsive to intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics in terms of their levels of job satisfaction. This differential response may be due to variations in the relative salience of intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics for workers of different ages. Younger workers are focusing on finding jobs that suit their interests and abilities and provide the best opportunities and potential for future personal and economic success. Older workers, on the other hand, are in positions in which opportunities for further development in job content are limited; the salient issues revolve around maintaining and consolidating a secure position which allows for the building of resources for retirement. Limited support for this hypothesis has been provided by Katz (1978) who found older workers' levels of job satisfaction generally less responsive to

several intrinsic job characteristics than those of younger workers. An analysis of the processes through which workers achieve salient job characteristics has been developed by Kalleberg (1977).

To what extent can we say that older workers are more extrinsically oriented and younger more intrinsically oriented in relation to sources of job satisfaction? Are different job characteristics required to provide satisfying work situations for older and younger workers? This study addresses these questions in a manner which goes beyond previous research by examining the presence or absence of perceived job characteristics directly in relation to overall job satisfaction so that a clear link may be established between various job characteristics and overall job satisfaction. In addition, these relationships are examined with data including a wide range of items asked of a large and comprehensive sample.

Method

Sample

The data analyzed in this study were collected in 1969 by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan under contract with the Employment Standards Administration of the U. S. Department of Labor. Personal interviews were conducted with a national probability sample of 1,533 persons 16 years old or older who were working for pay at least 20 hours a week. More detailed information regarding the sampling and interviewing procedures, the interview schedule, item and scale reliabilities, demographic characteristics of the respondents, and frequency distributions

for individual questions is given in the Survey of Working Conditions final report (Quinn et al., 1971) and in Voydanoff (1978).

Measures

In order to facilitate scale development, 66 items measuring perceived job characteristics and overall job satisfaction have been factor analyzed for the total sample of nonfarm wage and salary workers (N = 1301) and for members of four age groups--workers under 30, workers aged 30-44, workers aged 45-54, and workers 55 and older. The factor analysis procedure consisted of principal factoring with an iteration procedure to improve upon the maximum off-diagonal correlation coefficients used as initial communality estimates. The initial factor matrix was rotated according to an orthogonal varimax procedure. The factor structures do not differ substantially across age groups indicating that the underlying dimensions of the perceived job characteristics are similar for workers in different age groups in this sample.

On the basis of the factor analysis of the total sample, items were selected for the following scales of perceived job characteristics: Financial Rewards-Promotion, Hard Work, Physical Context, Role Strain, Supervision, Working Conditions, Enriching Job Demands, and Self Expression. The items included in each scale and the factor loadings for the total sample are presented in Table 1. The scale values were computed by summing the responses to each item with equal weight

[Insert Table 1 about here]

given to each. The item stems listed in Table 1 are based on the following

questions:

Would you say this is a lot like your job, somewhat like your job, a little like your job, or not at all like your job? (Indicated by "a lot" in Table 1)

I'll read some things that may or may not be true of your immediate superior. Tell me how true you think each is of him or her. Would you say this was very true of him/her, somewhat true, not too true, or not at all true? (Indicated by "very true" in Table 1)

All of us occasionally feel bothered by certain kinds of things in our work. I'll read a list of things that sometimes bother people, and I would like you to tell me how frequently you feel bothered by each of them--nearly all the time, rather often, sometimes, rarely, never. (Indicated by "nearly all the time" in Table 1)

Another question asked the respondents to sort item cards into piles labeled very true, somewhat true, not too true, and not at all true, according to how true each one was of their jobs. (Indicated by "very true" in Table 1)

In Tables 2 and 3 correlations among the scales of perceived job characteristics are presented for the four age groups. These tables

[Insert Tables 2 and 3 about here]

indicate that the patterns of correlations are similar among the age groups. Several of the correlations among the scales are relatively high, especially those including either the working conditions or self expression scales. Thus correlations among working conditions-supervision, working conditions-self expression, and self expression-enriching job demands are relatively high in all age groups.

Intrinsic characteristics are measured by the enriching job demands and self expression scales while financial rewards-promotion, hard work, physical context, role strain, supervision, and working conditions measure extrinsic characteristics. Self expression is a separate scale because it loads highly on two factors, one intrinsic and one extrinsic. This overlap, along with ambiguity regarding whether specific items in some of the extrinsic scales measure extrinsic job features, illustrates the limitations involved in making the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics (Dyer and Parker, 1975). The distinction is used in this study because it reflects an important contrast in work orientations in an efficient way and because it facilitates comparisons with a large and diverse body of previous work. The scales of perceived job characteristics are the independent variables used in the multiple regression analyses for the four age groups.

Overall job satisfaction, the dependent variable, is measured by responses to the most frequently used single-item question--"All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your job--very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied, or not at all satisfied?" Similar results are obtained when a six-item job satisfaction scale is used as the dependent variable. Data using the single item are reported since it seems to be a purer measure than the scale which includes items regarding planning to look for another job, recommending the job to a friend, and so on.

Statistical Analysis

A stepwise multiple regression procedure is used in which the independent variable explaining the most variance in the dependent variable is entered in the regression equation first followed by the independent variable explaining the most variance after the effects of the first variable are taken into account. Independent variables are added to the equation one at a time until all variables explaining a specified amount of variance are included. This process produces the best prediction possible with the fewest independent variables.

Results

The results of the regression analyses of overall job satisfaction and the perceived job characteristics for the four age groups are presented in Table 4. Two perceived job characteristic scales appear in the regression equations for all age groups--role strain and financial rewards-promotion.

[Insert Table 4 about here]

The beta coefficients for these scales range from first to third in relative size for all groups except those ∧ 55 and older for whom the beta coefficient for financial rewards-promotion ranks fifth. Self expression is entered into the regression equation first for workers under 30 and workers aged 30-44 since it has the highest zero-order correlation with job satisfaction; however, financial rewards-promotion has a slightly higher beta coeffcient for workers under 30. Supervision is included in the equations for those under 30, 45-54, and 55 and older. Supervision is entered into the equation first for workers aged 45-54 and second for those 55 and older. When the

effects of other variables are controlled, however, the beta coefficients rank second and third respectively. Supervision is fifth in importance for workers under 30. Enriching job demands is included in the equations of two groups--the youngest and oldest--although its zero-order correlation with job satisfaction is relatively low in all groups except the youngest. Working conditions has relatively high zero-order correlations with job satisfaction but is included in the equation only for those 45-54 years old and then with a relatively low beta coefficient. Hard work has relatively low zero-order correlations with job satisfaction and is included in the equation only for the oldest age group, again with a relatively low beta coefficient. Physical context has low zero-order correlations with job satisfaction and is not included in any of the regression equations.

Discussion

The results support and refine the hypothesis that intrinsic characteristics are relatively more important in relation to job satisfaction among younger workers while extrinsic characteristics are more important among older workers. The self expression scale has higher zero-order correlations and beta coefficients among younger workers while supervision has higher coefficients among older workers. Two extrinsically oriented scales, role strain and financial rewards-promotion, are related to job satisfaction in all age groups. Thus for younger workers both intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics are relatively important in relation to job satisfaction. Among older workers extrinsic job characteristics are

relatively more important. This suggests that younger workers are responsive to a broader range of job characteristics in terms of job satisfaction. Perhaps younger workers are influenced by the presence of job characteristics indicating that a job meets several different criteria for satisfaction while older workers respond to job characteristics which center around the consolidation of a secure position.

The relatively high correlations and beta coefficients for supervision among older workers is somewhat surprising since the extrinsic characteristic usually considered of most salience to older workers is financial and job security. It is possible, however, that the emphasis on supervision may reflect a security orientation that is mediated by the relationship between the worker and the supervisor. The supervisor serves as a link between the worker and the broader job context. It is through the relationship with the supervisor that the worker is able to obtain financial rewards and job security. This interpretation is supported by the strength of the relationship between role strain and job satisfaction among the oldest workers. Role strain is also oriented to dealing with people in an organizational context.

The results of this study indicate that some of the perceived job characteristics related to job satisfaction are the same for workers in all age groups while the relative importance of others varies with age. Thus among younger workers both intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics are of major importance in relation to job satisfaction; among older workers

extrinsic characteristics are relatively more important in relation to job satisfaction while job content factors are relatively less important. The results point out that both job design, especially in terms of self expression, role strain, and supervision, and improvements in financial rewards-promotion should provide more satisfying work situations for workers of all ages. Age differences in the relative importance of self expression and supervision refine these general results.

References

Andrisani, Paul J., and Robert C. Miljus

1976 "A multivariate analysis of individual differences in preferences for intrinsic versus extrinsic aspects of work among national samples of young and middle-aged male workers." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association.

Cohn, Richard M.

1979 "Age and the satisfactions from work." Journal of Gerontology 34: 264-272.

Dyer, Lee, and Donald F. Parker

1975 "Classifying outcomes in work motivation research." Journal of Applied Psychology 60: 455-458.

Finifter, Ada W. (Ed.)

1972 Alienation and the Social System. New York: Wiley.

Flacks, Richard

1970 "Social and cultural meanings of student revolt." Social Problems 17: 340-357.

Fox, Alan

1971 A Sociology of Work in Industry. Toronto: Macmillan.

Friedlander, Frank

1963 "Underlying sources of job satisfaction." Journal of Applied Psychology 47: 246-250.

1966 "Motivations to work and organization performance." Journal of Applied Psychology 50: 143-152.

Gurin, Gerald, Joseph Veroff, and Sheila Feld

1960 Americans View Their Mental Health. New York: Basic Books.

Herzberg, Frederick

1966 Work and the Nature of Man. Cleveland: World.

Herzberg, Frederick, Bernard Mausner, and Barbara B. Snyderman

1959 The Motivation to Work. New York: Wiley.

Jurgensen, Clifford E.

1978 "Job preferences (what makes a job good or bad?)." Journal of Applied Psychology 63: 267-276.

Kalleberg, Arne L.

1977 "Work values and job rewards: A theory of job satisfaction." American Sociological Review 42: 124-143.

Katz, Ralph

1978 "The influence of job longevity on employee reactions to task characteristics." Human Relations 31: 703-725.

Quinn, Robert P. et al.

1971 Survey of Working Conditions. Washington: GPO.

Saleh, Shoukry D.

1964 "A study of attitude change in the preretirement period." Journal of Applied Psychology 48: 310-312.

Sheppard, Harold L., and Neal Q. Herrick

1972 Where Have All the Robots Gone? New York: Free Press.

Singh, Tripit N., and Howard Baumgartel

1966 "Background factors in ariline mechanics' work motivations." Journal of Applied Psychology 50: 357-359.

Voydanoff, Patricia

1978 "The relationship between perceived job characteristics and job satisfaction among occupational status groups." Sociology of Work and Occupations 5: 179-192.

Wernimont, Paul F.

1966 "Intrinsic and extrinsic factors in job satisfaction." Journal of Applied Psychology 50: 41-50.

Wright, James D., and Richard F. Hamilton

1978 "Work satisfaction and age." Social Forces 56: 1140-58.

Yankelovich, Daniel

1972 Changing Values on Campus. New York: Pocket.

1974 "The meaning of work." Pp. 19-47 in J. Rosow (ed.), The Worker and the Job. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Table 1

Scales of Perceived Job Characteristics with
Factor Loadings for the Total Sample

Extrinsic Factors	Factor
Factor 1--Financial Rewards-Promotion	1
The pay is good (very true)	.48
My fringe benefits are good (very true)	.63
The job security is good (very true)	.56
The chances for promotion are good (very true)	.34
How fairly promotions are handled where you work (completely fairly)	.30
Factor 2--Hard Work	2
Requires that you work very fast (a lot)	.59
Requires that you work very hard (a lot)	.72
Supervisor insists that those under him work hard (very true)	.41
Factor 3--Physical Context	3
Requires that you be skilled in using your hands (a lot)	.37
Requires that you exert a lot of physical effort (a lot)	.50
Does your job at any time expose you to what you feel are physical dangers or unhealthy conditions? (yes)	.52
Factor 4--Role Strain	4
The fact that you can't get information needed to carry out your job (nearly all the time)	.52
Not knowing just what the people you work with expect of you (nearly all the time)	.62
Thinking that the amount of work you have to do may interfere with how well it gets done (nearly all the time)	.52
Feeling that you have to do things that are against your better judgment (nearly all the time)	.55
Being unclear on just what the scope and responsibilities of your job are (nearly all the time)	.64
Feeling unable to influence your immediate supervisor's decisions and his actions that affect you (nearly all the time)	.59
Feeling that you have too little authority to carry out the responsibilities assigned to you (nearly all the time)	.62
Not knowing what your supervisor thinks of you, how he evaluates your performance	.61

Table 1, Cont'd.

Scales of Perceived Job Characteristics with Factor Loadings for the Total Sample

	5	6	7
Factor 5--Supervision			
My supervisor is very concerned about the welfare of those under him (very true)	.57		
My supervisor is competent in doing his job (very true)	.64		
Takes a personal interest in those he supervises (very true)	.65		
Knows his own job well (very true)	.70		
Encourages those he supervises to develop new ways of doing things (very true)	.53		
Maintains high standards of performance in his own work (very true)	.74		
Goes out of his way to praise good work (very true)	.59		
Factor 6--Working Conditions			
The hours are good (very true)		.44	
I am free from conflicting demands that other people make of me (very true)		.48	
I have enough time to get the job done (very true)		.53	
I can forget about my personal problems (very true)		.44	
I can see the results of my work (very true)		.50	
The physical surroundings are pleasant (very true)		.55	
I am not asked to do excessive amounts of work (very true)		.44	
I receive enough help and equipment to get the job done (very true)		.44	
My co-workers are friendly and helpful (very true)		.57	
I am given a lot of chances to make friends (very true)		.43	
Intrinsic Factors		Factors	
Factor 7--Enriching Job Demands			
Requires that you keep having to learn new things (a lot)			.63
Requires that you do a lot of planning ahead (a lot)			.69
Allows you a lot of freedom to how you do your work (a lot)			.40
Requires a high level of skill (a lot)			.58
Allows you to make a lot of decisions on your own (a lot)			.62
Requires that you be creative (a lot)			.67
Allows you to do a variety of different things (a lot)			.54
How often do you get so wrapped up in your work that you lose track of the time? (very often)			.46
Self Expression		6	7
I am given a chance to do the things I do best (very true)		.45	.38
The work is interesting (very true)		.44	.44
I have an opportunity to develop my special abilities (very true)		.42	.51

Note. Items on the role strain, hard work, and physical context scales are coded in the reverse direction from the others in terms of what is considered a desirable job.

Table 2

Correlations Among Scales:
16-29 Year Olds Above Diagonal
30-44 Year Olds Below Diagonal

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Financial Rewards-Promotion		.07	.03	.19	.33	.38	.26	.40
2. Hard Work	.06		.35	.22	.02	.20	-.12	.03
3. Physical Context	.16	.22		.10	-.01	.12	.01	-.02
4. Role Strain	.17	.20	.07		.34	.44	-.05	.09
5. Supervision	.26	.01	.17	.41		.50	.31	.38
6. Working Conditions	.30	.12	.07	.41	.49		.17	.44
7. Enriching Job Demands	.25	-.12	.19	-.04	.24	.12		.60
8. Self Expression	.32	.04	.21	.19	.39	.50	.58	

Table 3

Correlations Among Scales:
45-54 Year Olds Above Diagonal
Workers 55 and Older Below Diagonal

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Financial Rewards-Promotion		-.02	.08	.20	.42	.49	.27	.51
2. Hard Work	.14		.11	.12	-.06	.10	-.12	-.09
3. Physical Context	.16	.38		.10	.08	.02	.11	.03
4. Role Strain	.25	.23	.01		.43	.32	-.13	.17
5. Supervision	.28	.11	.11	.39		.40	.18	.35
6. Working Conditions	.46	.15	.09	.45	.44		.16	.53
7. Enriching Job Demands	.19	-.26	.03	-.13	.25	.07		.47
8. Self Expression	.41	-.14	-.07	.25	.33	.55	.50	

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analysis of Perceived Job Characteristics and Job Satisfaction among Age Groups

Job Characteristic	16-29		30-44		45-54		55+	
	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta
Role Strain	.314	.207	.441	.344	.409	.210	.519	.422
Financial Rewards-Promotion	.487	.272	.331	.149	.460	.238	.314	.115
Self Expression	.497	.218	.497	.384	.397		.286	
Supervision	.425	.129	.375		.480	.218	.404	.151
Enriching Job Demands	.402	.160	.264		.182		.139	.168
Working Conditions	.414		.417		.452	.178	.343	
Hard Work	.095		.084		.095		.219	.134
Physical Context	.055		.138		.012		.071	
R^2		.429		.392		.381		.369
N		326		334		222		149

Note. The normalized beta coefficients are taken from the equation at the point where the next independent varible entered into the equation contributes less than one percent to the explained variance. Since the items on the role strain, hard work, and physical context scales are coded in the reverse direction from the others (see Table 1), all the beta coefficients are positive.